CITY OF ISSAQUAH WASHINGTON

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To: Development Commission
Parties of Record

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Applicant:
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Subject: Community Meeting and Conference Response Memo for
The Firs at Talus Preliminary Plat
COM21-00001 for PP21-00001 / PRJ21-00005

The Firs at Talus Attachments (uploaded as separate files, tied to the project):

1) Traffic Memo: "PP21-00001_1R_Memorandum-Traffic_2021-02-02"
2) Critical Areas Report: "PP21-00001_1R_Critical-Areas-Report_2021-02-02"
3) Tree Retention Report: "COM21-00001_1R_Tree-Retention-Plan_2021-04-20"
4) Full Plan Set: "PP21-00001_1R_Plans_2021-02-02"

Background and Process:
The Firs at Talus project proposal is for a preliminary plat. The process for a preliminary plat requires staff review and City consultant (i.e., environmental professional, lighting consultant) and any necessary corrections/revisions in follow up to staff review comments. A Notice of Application (NOA) is mailed once the city has received a full submittal packet from an applicant. After the NOA, a Community Conference (a meeting held early in the process of application to engage the community and encourage feedback to the applicant on the proposal as well as to the city staff so that any concerns or issues may be addressed) is held. This typically occurs prior to staff having done an in-depth review of the project

proposal and is for high-level comments and discussion between citizens, Develop Commission, Applicant, and City staff. An additional meeting is also held in coordination with the Environmental Board to discuss environmental concerns.

This response memo is in follow up to both the topics of discussion and questions discussed at the Environmental Meeting and Community Conference. The community and Development Commission are invited to provide comments for two weeks following the issuance of this memo. Following the two-week comment period, staff will review and make any necessary edits or additions to the memo.

Following the finalization of the response memo, the applicant will provide revised plans and other related documents to the city which will then be reviewed by both City staff and the City consultants. If there are additional corrections and/or revisions, they shall be addressed prior to the drafting of a staff report and recommendation to the Hearing Examiner.

Once an appropriate proposal has been provided that addresses all review comments, a hearing will be scheduled with the Hearing Examiner (HE) and notice will be provided to all property owners within 300-feet of the subject property as well as to parties of record (The applicant and any other person who has submitted written comment on any action or proposed action, or who has appeared at a public hearing or public meeting and signed an official register requesting notice of further action). Once a hearing has been scheduled, a staff recommendation will be drafted for the HE to review. An additional notice will be mailed once the HE has reached a decision which will include an appeal period and related information. The community is welcome to attend the hearing and comment to the Hearing Examiner on the proposal. The Hearing Examiner will be the decision maker.

Once the Hearing Examiner has reached a decision, the decision will be emailed to parties of record. The decision will include an appeal period and related information. If the preliminary plat is approved, the applicant may then submit construction drawings for review. Following their approval work on the site can begin.

For more information related to the relevant code regulations tied to the process, please see Chapter 18.04 and 18.13 IMC.

In response to the Development Commission's and the public's questions and comments at the May 19, 2021, Community Conference as well as comments provided by the public, the following information and responses are provided:

Topic #1: Traffic along SR-900, Signal, Traffic Report Requirements

- Sight triangle at SR-900
- Traffic signal requirement
- Traffic study/AM Peak analysis

Staff:
Sight Triangle: Traffic and access, including site triangle will be addressed through compliance with applicable City standards and codes and/or will be mitigated as necessary.

The requirements for sight distance triangles are outlined within the City of Issaquah Street Standards, under Design, Section C which outline that when a minor street is meeting a major street that a left turn sight-line setback applies. The applicant's new road access will be evaluated to ensure that the appropriate sight triangle length is provided.

Traffic Signal: A warrant analysis (analysis of conditions of use to determine the need of a traffic control device) is the trigger required for a light to be considered. Per the typical trigger for a warrant analysis the proposal does not plan to develop the number of homes to require a warrant analysis and therefore wouldn't generate sufficient trips to allow a signal to be installed. In addition, all lighting related to the project will be reviewed by the City's Lighting Consultant prior to approval and construction. Staff will ensure lighting at the intersection complies with all applicable Codes.

Traffic Study: Based on the proposed buildout of the property, traffic from the development appears to have been adequately addressed within the traffic memo provided (Attachment 1) by the Applicant; however, it will continue to be evaluated during the full land use review. Based on the City's requirements, a traffic study would not be required nor would the assessment of AM Peak data: The City's standard is review of PM Peak due to level of traffic being greater during a concentrated period in the evening than the morning. The project does not generate enough traffic to look more in-depth at either AM or PM Peak, than that which has already been provided.

Generally, this level of development will generate fairly low levels of traffic as outlined within the applicant's traffic memo.

Applicant: Our preliminary TIA does not indicate the need for a traffic light, due to number of trips that the project will generate. Applicant will work with staff for compliance with City code and requirements.

The development team will work with consultant and staff to identify possible traffic impacts and mitigation.

A sight distance review is part of the review carried out by City staff and will be addressed with the City staff, by our consultants.

Conclusion: The project appears to comply at this preliminary review stage. The applicant will be required to follow the applicable sight triangle setbacks outlined within the Design chapter, Section C of the City of Issaquah Street Standards. The City has set triggers for traffic signals and standards for traffic studies; per the City of Issaquah Road Standards the applicant's project proposal will not require a traffic signal nor would AM Peak evaluation be required as the data is less pertinent as compared to PM Peak data.

Topic #2: Woonerf Standards

- Applicability/functionality of a Woonerf on the subject site
- Who maintains the roadway/drive to development?

Staff: Woonerfs (a circulation area shared by pedestrians, wheeled users and vehicles giving priority to pedestrians over vehicles) are allowed within the Talus replacement regulations found under IMC 18.19C.250. The potential of a Woonerf associated with the subject project

is being reviewed by City staff, specifically traffic engineering and planning, to assess if the road style is suitable. The applicant has noted that there will be a Homeowner's Association for the development which will be responsible for the care and maintenance of the roadway.

Applicant: If applied, the Woonerf would span from near the entry all the way up to the main road. The proposed road option would require us to seek a modification of standards, and a Woonerf option would not. We will work with staff to assess the best option for the main road going into the site.

The development will have a HOA formed prior to the sale of any units. The HOA will arrange the road (and wall) maintenance.

Conclusion: If the applicant can demonstrate the appropriate applicability of a Woonerf for the buildout of the subdivision and also follow all other necessary regulations then a Woonerf is acceptable per the application of IMC 18.19C.250. The city's traffic engineer, planners and Fire Chief will review and assess the best option and ensure that the road will meet all standards.

Topic #3: Pedestrian access and trail network

- Pedestrian access from SR-900
- Trail connection to Talus
- Coordination with the Talus HOA for trail network extension

Staff: The purpose of the Talus Urban Village, as outlined within IMC 18.19C.010, is to inspire an animated and connected urban community where pedestrians are priority, with interrelated buildings and open spaces and development that makes a positive contribution to the public realm. Throughout Chapter 18.19C, the theme of pedestrian-friendly development is prevalent.

Currently SR-900/Renton-Issaquah Road provides sidewalks on the west side of the roadway which will connect to the proposed development. The applicant is planning to extend the existing Talus trail network to connect to the existing frontage improvements on SR-900. The applicant is working out his options for a sidewalk or a soft surface trail in correlation to the road standards that he chooses to use for the project proposal.

There are continuing discussions taking place between the applicant team and the City staff to identify the best option for a trail connection from the existing upland Talus trail to SR-900. Additional details will be provided with the revised submittal for the preliminary plat. The applicant will be required to follow the regulations set forth within IMC 18.19C.230 related to trail development within Talus.

The applicant will communicate with the Talus HOA to coordinate if a feasible trail network effort to connect the subject project to upland Talus development is possible.

Applicant: Site plan will be revised to show a Woonerf, as is permitted by the [Talus Replacement Regulations within Chapter 18.19C IMC]. This will provide joint pedestrian/vehicular access within the site.

We [applicant team] will continue to work with staff on possible trail connections adjacent or within the proposed project.

Applicant has extensive experience with trail building and coordination with City of Issaquah and encourages connection opportunities to proposed project.

Conclusion: The proposed streets will need to provide adequate facilities for pedestrian use or offer an alternative option such as a trail to connect to upland Talus and to SR-900 while also maintaining appropriate circulation and functionality for automobile use. The applicant will be revising his roadway proposal and continued review will take place with the revised submittal.

Topic #4: Access, Impacts to Critical Areas by Access Points

- Fire department access
- New entrance impacts to critical areas
- Additional access road to upland Talus

Staff: Access to homes will be required to follow both the regulations outlined within IMC 18.19C.240 as well as the City of Issaquah Street Standards, where guidance is not available within Chapter 18.19C or are a construction level of detail.

If a Woonerf[1] is implemented, it will be developed as a private road, as proposed by the applicant. The access and use provisions for a private and public roadway are the same and are outlined within the City of Issaquah Street Standards. Additional regulations for Woonerfs and Talus roadways are outlined within IMC 18.19C.250.

Fire access will be required to comply with the standards set forth within the City Street Standards and will be reviewed for compliance by the Eastside Fire Marshal. IMC 18.19C.240(C) provides key guidance for Woonerf fire access/turnaround standards. Specific requirements include either two (2) ten (10) foot travel lanes or 18 feet of width coordinated with the Fire Marshal.

The work to be done to improve the access entrance from SR-900 will be reviewed in alignment with the standards set forth within Chapter 18.10 IMC. The applicant shall meet the requirements regarding development within wetlands/wetland buffers as provided in IMC 18.10.590 through 18.10.760, in additional to other applicable sections.

An easement is currently in place for access through the neighboring property (to the south/southeast). Current engineering analysis assesses that this is the best route although further analysis is still being done with the full preliminary plat review.

Additional Access: The project proposal is not required to provide an additional access road to upland Talus development, and it does not appear that a vehicular connection from the subject site to upland Talus is possible. A pedestrian connection will be explored as part of the full plat review.

In alignment with IMC 18.10.650, the applicant's wetland biologist will need to provide a justification for the buffer averaging request which will then be reviewed by the city's consulting wetland biologist, prior to recommendation to the Hearing Examiner. The same process will apply to any requests for stream buffer averaging which are addressed under IMC 18.10.790.

Applicant: Grades and turning radius for emergency vehicles have been designed to City standards. The project includes a 15% road grade. We are still discussing maintenance vehicle issues with the City.

Applicant [team] will update original submitted site plan to lessen impact to Wetland A buffer. A Variance will still be required to provide site access. Actual access point is within the limits of the original house driveway.

The access easement was granted to the property when WSDOT constructed the tall retaining walls spanning across the entire property frontage, thereby cutting off any direct access from the parcel.

Conclusion: As noted above, the access proposal will be required to follow the regulations set forth within Chapter 18.19C as well as the City of Issaquah Street Standards. A proposal illustrating compliance with both IMC 18.19C and Street Standards but located within the vicinity or buffer of a critical area such as wetland will be required to demonstrate compliance with the standards set forth within Chapter 18.10 IMC. Additionally, any documents providing illustration that the standards are being met will also be peer reviewed by the City's consultant.

Fire department access will be reviewed in conjunction with Eastside Fire and Rescue; the proposal will require compliance with IMC 18.19C.240 as well as the City's Street Standards and any applicable critical areas regulations. The applicant will need to ensure that the revised submittal accurately reflects the Woonerf, and other street standards outlined within Chapter 18.19C IMC as well as demonstrate how the proposal has mitigated impacts to the critical areas. More in-depth review will occur with the revised plan set submittal. The applicant may be required to apply for a critical area variance for the roadway if the critical area buffer requirements and allowances for buffer reduction cannot be met. The Woonerf design is generally less impactful than a standard roadway with separate sidewalks. The applicant will be required to address the specific aspects of how a Woonerf standard will decrease impacts within an addendum to the critical areas report provided.

Topic #5: Retaining Walls, Clearing/Grading, and Drainage

- Allowed heights of retaining walls
- Maintenance and drainage requirements for retaining walls
- Sufficiency of drainage plan
- Safety gate at site
- Safety during clearing and grading
- Clearing and grading in the winter months

Staff:

Retaining Walls: The Talus Replacement Regulations communicate that development on hillsides must respect the topographic character of each site through building design and siting, and minimizing the height of retaining walls, with the intention of blending into the native environment and retaining existing trees. The allowed height of retaining walls is outlined within IMC 18.19C.200(C), stating that: retaining walls on the site shall be no taller than ten (10) feet, with trees ranging from 30 to 35 feet and shrubs planted in front to reduce

their appearance. If taller walls are required, they shall be terraced with ground cover, shrubs and preferably trees, in between.

Retaining walls for this project will be reviewed with the regulations set forth within IMC 18.10.580, 18.19C.200, as well as CIDDS 10.9. Any disturbance to the critical area will require mitigation that complies with IMC 18.10.490.

The applicant must demonstrate how he has met the intent of maintaining the character of the slope and minimized the proposed retaining walls for the site. Staff will ensure compliance through continued review of the applicant's revised submittal. Inspections will be carried out to ensure compliance at time of construction.

Drainage Requirements: The project will be required to demonstrate compliance with the 2014 Ecology Stormwater Management Manual for Wester Washington, as revised.

Roof discharge could potentially be directed to wetlands/stream in the vicinity and the city will address that option with the applicant to determine if it is a beneficial or negative impact. The City does encourage the use of storm low impact development strategies to encourage runoff to replenish groundwater and critical areas on-site, like infiltration and dispersion. These strategies depend on favorable site conditions.

The adopted storm design manual for the City recommends dispersion on slopes less than 15%. The general topography in the developable areas of the site is in the 15% to 25% slope range, with some areas containing slopes greater than 40%. These areas are too steep for general dispersion.

City code and the adopted storm design manual for the City require stormwater runoff to be discharged in a manner that does not adversely impact critical areas in the vicinity.

The drainage design is preliminary, and staff will continue to work with the applicant on the storm design, but early indications are not favorable for infiltration or dispersion of runoff on this site.
Safety Gate: For increased safety, a construction gate we will requested,

Safety During Clearing and Grading: The appropriate process outlined within the Ecology Manual will be required. A site Inspector will periodically survey the site to ensure compliance. Site safety measures will be in place through all phases of construction, following applicable federal, state, and local construction safety requirements.

Additional safety measures include ongoing monitoring and require compliance with TESC will be required. Based on the submitted Geotechnical Report (ABPB Consulting, 2017) identifying soils with high percentage of fines, low permeability, and not suitable for use as structural fill in wet weather conditions, in addition to the presence of an elevated winter water table, the City will consider conditioning the project so that earth disturbing activities (like clearing and grading, excavation for walls and structure foundations, utility trenches, etc.) occur only during the seasonally drier months between April 30th and September 30th.

The applicant will need to provide more in-depth information related to critical areas, buffers and clearing limits. The project design submitted is preliminary as the City staff continues to work with the applicant towards an approved design. The submitted geotechnical report will be peer reviewed by two City consultants to verify stability of site slopes and ensure all steep slope setbacks and cuts are in compliance with City code.

Applicant: As you enter the site, retaining walls are required on either side of the roadway. Some will be cut, and some will be fill, [leading] up to the building site. Above the buffer, a retaining wall will span the length of the alley, ranging from 2 to 10 feet in height, [if the current design proposal for the road is followed]. At the top of the site, about ten (10) feet of retaining wall will serve to limit impacts to the surrounding buffer area. The design also calls for smaller retaining walls at the top of the site, 2 to 6 feet in height; some will be in the backyards of residences. It is not anticipated that retaining walls will exceed 10 feet in height. Site grading will be adjusted to limit retaining wall heights, as required.

The development will have a HOA formed prior to sale of any units. The HOA will arrange for both road and wall maintenance.

Project is located below the seasonal stream and wetland B, and drainage/runoff will not impact those wetlands. We will work with our consultants and staff to develop a plan that preserves and enhances the existing wetland A.

We will adjust site grading retaining walls to limit maximum retaining wall height to 10ft, as required.

Contractor will employ a state certified CESCL inspector to monitor all approved erosion control measures throughout the development and build-out period. Developer has over 40 years of experience developing steep projects in and around Issaquah, with no significant environmental issues ever occurring.

Staff Conclusion: The applicant is in the beginning stages of working through an effective design with the City staff. He and his team will be required to meet the standards for construction of retaining walls as well as follow the standards set forth within the 2014 Ecology Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington, as related to storm water and drainage on the site. Safety measure will be required to be followed and will be monitored throughout development phases. A construction gate will be requested. Clearing and grading will be limited to the times of year deemed appropriate as related to specific site characteristics and geotechnical engineering review

Topic #6: Critical Area and Trees

- Setbacks from steep slopes
- Steep slope buffer in relation to proposed homes
- Cuts on slopes
- Erosion hazard and seismic hazards
- Wetland buffer requirements

- Wetland buffer details
- Wetland rating sheets lack flood data
- Stream location and buffer
- Buffer averaging
- Mitigation
- Tree retention numbers (percentage and caliper)

Staff: The applicant will need to provide more in-depth information related to critical areas, buffers and clearing limits. The project design submitted is preliminary as the City continues to work with the applicant towards an approved design.

Geotechnical: The submitted geotechnical report will be peer reviewed by City consultants to verify stability of site slopes and ensure all steep slope setbacks and cuts are in compliance with City code. The setback from the steep slope (an inclination of 40% of more within a vertical elevation change of at least 10 feet) is outlined in IMC 18.10.560 and call for a minimum buffer of 50 feet with an additional 15 feet for the building setback from the buffer; however, the buffer can be reduced if the slope meets certain geotechnical conditions and the City's peer reviewer concurs.

Required buffers will not be allowed to include backyard areas, however the building setback (BSBL) from the buffer will likely include some of the backyard areas, which is allowed. Additionally, a split rail fence is required at the edge of the critical area buffer to prevent disturbance consistent with IMC 18.10.660.

Preliminary data illustrates that there are both erosion and seismic hazards located on the southeastern portion of the site. The applicant's geotechnical report will be required to adequately address the implications for these sensitive areas as outlined within 18.10.520(B), related to erosion hazard areas and 18.10.570 as related to seismic hazard areas. Any construction within a seismic hazard area will also need to comply with applicable building standards.

The applicant will be required to show adjacent topography to the site, to indicate if there are steep slopes, as well as any other critical areas, on neighboring parcel whose buffers might extend onto this parcel. The illustration of these details will be provided in the revised submittal.

Wetlands: Wetland buffers will require compliance with the regulations outlined within IMC 18.10.640. Specifically, the City's wetland biologist consultants will conduct a peer review of the applicant's wetland report to confirm the field identification and formal delineation. The approval of the report provided is required prior to the preliminary plat being sent to the Hearing Examiner.

The largest buffer associated with wetland on the subject site is 75 feet for the Category III wetland with a habit score of 5 to 6, as illustrated within the wetland buffer standards, IMC 18.10.640(C).

If a wetland buffer is proposed that does not meet the standards outlined above, or the amount of adjustment proposed exceeds what is allowed through the land use review, a variance will be required which will be reviewed by the Hearing Examiner. Requirements for a wetland buffer variance are outlined within IMC 18.10.430(F).

In alignment with IMC 18.10.650, the applicant's wetland biologist will need to provide a justification for the buffer averaging request which will then be reviewed by the city's consulting wetland biologist, prior to Staff's recommendation to the Hearing Examiner. The same process will apply to any requests for stream buffer averaging which are addressed under IMC 18.10.790.

Mitigation: An adequate mitigation and maintenance plan is required for any project that includes, is adjacent to, or could have adverse impacts to critical areas. The applicant is responsible for the provision of a critical areas report which will include the address of an ongoing maintenance and monitoring plan. Mitigation efforts shall be part of the environmental report and review process, as outlined within IMC 18.10.490 through 18.10.515. Applicability and applicant's mitigation proposal will be peer reviewed by the City's consultants. Financial surety in the form of both a performance and maintenance bond will be required to ensure that mitigation adequately occurs in relation to the site's critical areas.

Trees: Tree retention numbers and caliper will be required to comply with the requirements of IMC 18.12.1370 through 18.12.1390, additional tree plan requirements are outlined within IMC 18.12.141, and maintenance addressed within IMC 18.12.160. Minimum tree density for single-family homes requires 2 significant trees per 5,000 square feet. Additionally, there are landscaping requirements for this development which will likely fall into the Type 2 range (medium trees spaced an average of 25 to 30 feet on center with a minimum of four trees per 5,000 square feet) which will require a minimum of 50% evergreen trees and shrubs, within the critical area these will be reviewed to ensure that native species and/or native adaptive species are used. The sizes for provided trees will need to be a minimum of six to eight feet for conifers and two-inch caliper for deciduous and evergreens.

Applicant: No development will occur within the steep slope buffer. Minor grading is proposed in the building setback, as are portions of back yards, as permitted by code. No structure is proposed within BSBL. Appropriate fencing and signage will be erected, per City requirements, to identify buffer and critical areas.

Applicant will work with staff and consultants to provide any required offsite information. Stream is located above proposed project site and will not be impacted by proposed construction.

Proposed site is not located in a flood zone. Proposed onsite detention is designed to detain and slowly release collected runoff generated by impervious surface and will comply will all applicable drainage codes.

Applicant will update original submitted site plan to lessen impact to Wetland A buffer. A Variance will still be required to provide site access. Actual access point is within the limits of the original house driveway.

Geotech report includes extensive on-site testing and several borings. Applicant has successfully developed several large communities within Talus and is familiar with underlying soils conditions. Applicant will work with staff and PEER consultants to address any identified concerns. Site layout and grading design utilizes existing topography to minimize impacts of grading with cuts and fills.

Conclusion: All aspects of impacts to critical areas and/or buffers requires the appropriate compliance and will be peer reviewed for most appropriate compliance for the specific characteristics on the site. The applicant will be required to provide revisions to the environmental reports if the peer reviewer so deems it necessary in correlation to the city's critical area regulations outlined within Chapter 18.10 IMC. Trees and other landscaping elements will be reviewed for compliance with Chapter 18.12 IMC and all other applicable codes.

Topic #7: General

- Zoning/Density allowed
- Distance to nearest upland Talus home
- Distance from Wilderness Peak
- Recreational space requirements
- Is additional development in Talus allowed?
- What traffic mitigation will occur during construction?
- How will non-native vegetation be cleared and maintained?

Staff:
Zoning/Density: The zoning for the subject site is Urban Village – Single Family (UVSF), which allows one single family residence per lot. The zoning cap for the property is 24 units, as outlined within Figure 2B, Talus Zoning and Zoning Cap Chart, IMC 18.19C.280. The applicant will have to comply with applicable height limits and all applicable development restrictions as outlined within IMC 18.19C.140. The maximum height is 45-feet, setbacks are a minimum of 5-feet for front, rear and sides unless attached townhomes are built which allows for a 0-foot side setback. There is no minimum lot size for this zone.

Proximity to Upland Talus: The closest home in upland Talus to the proposed building site is approximately 260-feet from the closest proposed home within the Firs proposal.

Proximity to Wilderness Peak: Wilderness Peak is approximately 240 feet from the proposed work site.

Recreation Space: Both individual and shared recreational space will be required to be provided in compliance with Chapter 18.19C and Central Issaquah Development and Design Standards (CIDDS). The developer will need to ensure that the intent for the urban village concept to encourage innovative uses, sites, and comprehensive planning, along with the

cluster housing development, properly integrates recreational facilities, as communicated within IMC 18.19C.050.

Development of the subject property was vested, titled "Emrick", within the Talus Replacement Regulations, under IMC 18.19C.280 – Vesting of permits. Only projects that were addressed under therein, at the time the replacement regulations were passed by the City Council may move forward with development. The subject property and scope are one of those that was included in the 2018 adoption of the Talus Replacement Regulations.

Traffic Mitigation: Traffic concerns commonly arise with any new mid to large scale development project. The traffic during construction will be mitigated through the provision of a construction impact mitigation plan which will be reviewed by the appropriate City staff prior to any work beginning.

Clearing of Non-native Vegetation: It will be encouraged that the applicant removes non-native invasive vegetation as aligned with IMC 18.10.400(K), as part of the associated mitigation efforts for the proposal.

Applicant: A traffic control plan will be developed, submitted, and approved by staff in conjunction with all site development activities.

Conclusion: The current proposal demonstrates compliance with zoning and density regulations, as well as property vesting, as outlined within 18.19C.280. Additional efforts will be needed to ensure that the revised plans clearly identify the provision of required recreational space, including both for the individual units as well as for shared recreational space.

Prior to site work permits being issues, a project specific traffic mitigation plan will be reviewed and require approval to safeguard traffic flow and other related concerns along SR-900.

Non-native vegetation will be addressed within the maintenance and enhancement plan of the critical areas report. Staff will encourage the removal of non-native invasive vegetation and the replacement with vegetation that will enhance and protect the associated buffers.